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Welfare Benefits and Ethnic Minorities: Transfers from Australia to the United-Kingdom

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Welfare Benefits and Ethnic Minorities: Transfers from Australia to the United-Kingdom

Sophie Koppe

- 1 With a quarter of its population born overseas, Australia is undoubtedly amongst the most culturally diverse countries in the world. This being a long-term trend, the country has gained some experience regarding integration issues. It is therefore easy to assume that other Western countries facing similar challenges but perhaps on a different scale would turn to Australian experiments and learn from them. This is all the more likely for countries which share strong historical ties with Australia such as the United Kingdom.
- 2 This does not mean that Australia is the only source of inspiration for British policy-makers but it is an interesting one. Several books, reports and articles were published in the 2000s to show how the Australian Labor Party had been a model for its British counterpart (Johnson, Scott). Some focused more closely on welfare reforms (Pierson, Finn). If the labour parties are a central element of this article, the position of the two coalitions is also important. One aspect of welfare reform will particularly be analysed: the support provided to ethnic minorities.
- 3 Social policy is one of the fields where Australia had to adapt to its ethnically diverse population. Centrelink, the public agency in charge of welfare payments in Australia, has had to make numerous changes to improve its service delivery. The 2010 figures from the public agency show that 20% (Centrelink, 2010) of its payments are received by recipients of “Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds” (DCALB)¹- a term coined by the agency 10 years ago (Centrelink, 2004, 116). A recent study from the Australian National Audit Office underlined that 6% of those recipients needed an interpreter (ANAO, 2012). The same study compared what was being done in Australia with the measures implemented elsewhere (namely in New Zealand, New York, California, the United Kingdom and Canada) and concluded that Australia was doing better in the range of available translated resources, had an efficient Multilingual Call Centre and

was the only country to have Multicultural Service Officers who are volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds recruited to facilitate the integration process.

- 4 These are examples of experiments that Australia felt it had to carry out and that might have appealed to British policy makers. The Australian government has repeatedly asserted its role in “being responsive to the needs of [Australia’s] culturally diverse communities”. The government’s 2011 multicultural policy “committed to an access and equity framework to ensure the onus is on government to provide equitable services to Australians from all backgrounds”(ANAO, 2012, 11). Measures like those previously mentioned indeed have a certain appeal as they show that the government is working to give those requiring it the assistance they need, but they are also implemented to make sure that recipients understand their duties — this rhetoric of rights and duties for welfare recipients is increasingly popular. That explains why the attention of British policy makers was drawn to the situation of “DCALB” welfare recipients: the Hansard as well as the national press contain mentions of a contentious piece of legislation passed in Australia which limited access to welfare benefits to those who had been permanent residents for more than two years (*The Telegraph*, 2013). The British government most recently echoed what their Australian counterparts were implementing more than 15 years ago:

That is why, as part of the government’s long-term economic plan, we have taken action. New rules are now in place to ensure we have a fair system — one which provides support for genuine workers and jobseekers, but does not allow people to come to our country and take advantage (DWP, 2013).

- 5 In order to assess the extent of the transfer of ideas from Australia to the United Kingdom, it will first be necessary to establish whether the conditions for such a process to occur were met. The reasons for which transfers actually take place (or don’t) will also be analysed.

Conditions for policy transfer to occur

- 6 The United Kingdom is a most likely candidate for policy borrowing. Since the 1990s, theories on “lesson drawing” or “policy transfer” have in fact been developed by British academics. Government grants such as the ESRC Future Governance Programme helped those researchers find new ways to explain how public policy is made (James and Lodge, 2003, 179). These theories are in fact useful to better understand why a country would look somewhere else to develop new social policy schemes or ideas. Dolowitz and Marsh describe the notion of transfer as follows:

[These studies are concerned with the] process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, 5).

- 7 To see that process through, several conditions need to be met.

Dissatisfaction


- 8 For policy transfer theorists, dissatisfaction plays a significant part in the transfer of ideas:

The potential for voluntary policy transfer exists at any spatiality of government as long as enough dissatisfaction or necessity exists and providing that an

entrepreneurial elite is ready to manipulate these grievances and establish a policy transfer network (Evans and Davies, 2004, 49).

- 9 Be it for the Labour or Conservative parties, a decade- or more- in the Opposition undoubtedly was a source of dissatisfaction. It is worth mentioning that when the British Labour Party was in the Opposition, the Australian Labor Party was in power and when the Conservatives were in the Opposition, the conservative Liberal National Coalition was in government: the Australian parties might have been a source of inspiration².

Table 1: Australian and British Prime Ministers

Liberal	11/03/1983	Malcolm Fraser		Margaret Thatcher	04/05/1979 28/11/1990	Conservatives
ALP	11/03/1983 20/12/1991	Bob Hawke		John Major	28/11/1990 02/05/1997	Conservatives
ALP	20/12/1991 11/03/1996	Paul Keating		Tony Blair	02/05/1997 27/06/2007	New Labour
Coalition	11/03/1996 03/12/2007	John Howard		Gordon Brown	27/06/2007 11/05/2010	New Labour
ALP	03/12/2007 24/06/2010	Kevin Rudd		David Cameron	11/05/2010	Coalition
ALP	24/06/2010	Julia Gillard				

- 10 An analysis of the situation of the British Labour Party while it was in the Opposition clearly shows dissatisfaction among both voters and party members (British Election Studies). There even was a kind of vicious circle as the plummeting numbers of Labour voters increased the tensions within the party, which in turn accelerated voter losses. Thus between 1966 and 1979 the percentage of Labour voters went from 48% in the 1966 General Elections, to 43.1% in 1970, 39.2% in 1974 and 36.9% in 1979 (Charlot).
- 11 There is no doubt that thirty years ago the British Labour Party offered a poor image as illustrated by this remark from Shaw after the attempted coup of Tony Benn to become the new party leader and replace Michael Foot in the early 1980s:
- [the] battle, fought under the spotlight of intense media interest, offered to the public a spectacle of a party tearing itself apart and Labour's poll ratings tumbled as millions of its supporters flocked to the SDP (Shaw, 1996, 165).
- 12 Among other changes brought about to improve the image of the party were mentions of what was being done in Australia. Bob Hawke's victory in 1983 led to the following comments:

[it] proved that modern socialists could take on arch-conservatism and beat it at the polls. We in Britain should draw the obvious lesson from the Australian model and modernize now (Scott, 2000).

- 13 As the interest for Australia grew, the link between dissatisfaction and the necessity to look at Australian reforms was even mentioned in the press. The Guardian was the newspaper of choice for the promotion of the success of the ALP. The latter was clearly presented as the model to follow and as an illustration that incumbency was a real possibility for British Labour.

The British Labour Party has lost four general elections in a row since 1979. The Australian Labour Party, by contrast, has won five on the trot since 1983. That is why Tony Blair has a regular hotline to Australia and why John Prescott has just been to Canberra to see how it is done.

Prescott is only the latest of a series of senior Labour politicians who have crossed the world for a crash course in Labour government. Party loyalists don't rule out another Keating recovery like 1992. That was the one in which, thanks to the ALP's remarkably effective marginal seat targeting policy (on which Prescott received valuable briefing last week), Labour turned round an election, which everyone expected them to lose (Kettle, 1995).

- 14 If we focus on the more recent situation of the Conservatives in the Opposition, it is also obvious that there were tensions and disagreements regarding social policy issues. In a lecture given in Australia, Iain Duncan Smith, the Conservative Secretary of State for Works and Pensions, described the former situation of his party as such:

Several years ago there was a deep need for change in Britain's Conservative party. We had suffered major election defeats and had become out of touch.

As leader I began a process of thinking anew about social reform and the need to reconnect with the aspirations of the British people — particularly those who had been let down by failed Government (Duncan Smith, 2011).

- 15 And this was immediately followed by a mention of Australian measures: "I must confess that in developing this programme we have taken a great deal of interest in Australia's welfare to work schemes" (Duncan Smith, 2011).
- 16 Dissatisfaction was obvious among British parties in the Opposition. But dissatisfaction in itself is not sufficient to induce policy transfer. Evans and Davies (quoted at the beginning of this section) also mention the need for networks to be active so that transfers might actually take place.

The existence of a network

- 17 According to policy transfer theorists, policy transfer is closely associated with globalization, and countries are therefore more likely to get inspiration from others than they used to:

As the world economy in particular is transformed by new modes of production and trade, and as transnational corporations and institutions come to exercise more influence and power, so the capacity of national policy-makers to frame their own agendas is diminished. Public policy now takes place in a world system as well as in national political systems (Parsons, 1996, 234).

- 18 The issue here is to see if — among so many potential sources — Australia is of particular interest to the United Kingdom as far as social policy and the treatment of ethnic minorities are concerned.

- 19 A shared history seems to be a good starting point for networks to be created and developed. Australia and the United Kingdom clearly have one when you think of social policy. Australia was supposed to be part of the solution to poverty in the Mother Country: many convicts deported to Australia had committed petty crimes which could be explained by their economic status. Notions such as the deserving/undeserving poor were transposed to Australia. Being a British colony influenced the way Australia dealt with poverty and unemployment. It is interesting to notice though that being part of the solution to poverty also explains why Australia gradually moved away from what was being done in the Mother Country to become a potential model for the latter (for instance many had known and dreaded the workhouse and no such system was ever implemented on a large scale in Australia). The country thus developed original ways of ensuring that poverty would not be as widespread as in Britain, for example through the arbitration system³.
- 20 Language is another element that helps build alliances. Even if stakeholders in the policy learning process speak other languages than their own, it would still be easier for them to focus on strategies developed in countries sharing their language. When there is no need for translation, errors in understanding or interpreting foreign reforms are less likely to occur. The importance of a common language in the policy learning process is for instance illustrated by the organisation since 2003 of an annual conference by the Six Nations Benefit Group where delegates from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States discuss issues such as welfare reform and welfare fraud. Each of the six countries gives presentations on the same topic and thus shares ways to tackle different issues.
- 21 Australia and the United Kingdom also share a more technical language. In order to adequately analyse reforms in a foreign welfare system, it is necessary to study different rules and regulations and both the Australian legal and political systems are relatively close to the Britain's systems. Even if Australia is a federal state, its structure is based on the Westminster model and such similarities lessen the barriers to the transposition of policies⁴.
- 22 If a common language does facilitate the circulation of ideas, there also need to be people ready to launch and maintain the process.
- 23 Among the most obvious means for potential policy transfer are the institutions: Governments can commission specific reports, parliamentary committees can send delegations abroad to see what is being done elsewhere. For instance, after the victory of the British Labour Party in 1997, the Select Committee on Education and Employment published a report on the Australian reform implemented by John Howard after 1996. It consisted in a complete overhaul of the provision of welfare services. The public employment agency (the Commonwealth Employment Service) was dismantled and its tasks were outsourced to the private and voluntary sectors. The balance between the rights and duties of the unemployed then clearly shifted towards their duties:

A number of interesting points arose during our visit and we believe that it is worthwhile devoting a separate report to the examination of the Australian system and to drawing out some of the lessons which may be relevant to the UK system. The principal purpose of our visit was not to assess how well the system was working in Australia, but to learn the lessons from the Australian system that might apply in the UK (Select Committee on Education and Employment, 1999).

- 24 There were also exchanges among public servants, Australians going to the United Kingdom to share their expertise on new public management techniques with colleagues from the British National Employment Agency. Within ministries, units had been created in the past to analyse ideas from abroad. Gordon Brown thus created a Welfare to Work unit within the Treasury where foreign researchers and policy-makers were invited to participate.
- 25 Non-governmental actors play a part too. Researchers and research centres are likely to be interested in learning about what has been done elsewhere. For instance the delegation sent to Australia in the above-mentioned report specifically thanked for his help one researcher, Dan Finn, who works on social policy in both countries:
- We are also grateful to the Committee's specialist adviser, Dan Finn, Senior Research Fellow in Social Policy at the University of Portsmouth, for his assistance in providing briefing material both before and after our visit (Select Committee on Education and Employment, 1999).
- 26 This report also shows that when they visited Australia the delegation visited placement agencies, Centrelink, interviewed public servants but they also interviewed many actors from the academic sphere.
- 27 Research centres represent another type of actors likely to be involved in the policy transfer process. But in order to be efficient, they need to have the attention of policy-makers. This was for instance the case of the Institute for Public Policy Research⁵, which was very close to the British Labour party. The research centre was key to the Commission on Social Justice that John Smith had worked for:
- John Smith's anger at the state of Britain today led him to establish the Commission on Social Justice. Its report will inform Labour's policy making and provide the basis for a vital national debate about the future of work and welfare. It is essential reading for everyone who wants a new way forward for our country (Commission on Social Justice, 1994, 13).
- 28 So the work of the Institute for Public Policy Research was to have a direct impact on future policy:
- The Commission on Social Justice was established to reassess the understanding of social justice, and to update our thinking on how best to respond to old challenges, but also account for new inequalities and divides. [...]
- The report was highly influential and its recommendations have been the subject of considerable debate. Many of its key themes, such as the need to balance rights with responsibilities, the idea that economic prosperity could go hand in hand with social justice and the value of lifelong learning were instrumental in shaping policy after 1997 (Commission on Social Justice, 1994).
- 29 The report that was later issued mentioned several of the reforms implemented in Australia. For instance in his correspondence with Gary Gray, the Party Secretary of the ALP explained that:
- The work of the commission will be critical to the rethinking that the party will be doing in the next few years; I am aware that you have made major changes in just these areas and would like to know more about them- and not least how they have been received both in the Party and in the country [and also] how interventionist should a modern social democratic government be (Scott, 2000, 116).
- 30 Members of the commission were also given access to some of the key documents which had led to a vastly influential report in Australia, *The Social Policy Review*, which made mention of the challenges raised by a culturally diverse population.

- 31 Besides those institutional networks are personal ones — the impact of which is difficult to assess. It is interesting to mention here that a former deputy director of the research centre was none other than Patricia Hewitt, whose father used to be a prominent Australian senior public servant. She was close to Neil Kinnock who sent Gordon Brown and Tony Blair to Australia in the 1990s:

I had repeated invitations to go to Australia ; always intended to go never got round to it. But I did send Gordon Brown and Tony Blair to spend some time in Australia because I thought they were the next generation and it was important that they had contact given my repeated desire and intention to come which, as I say, was never fulfilled (Scott, 2000, 4).

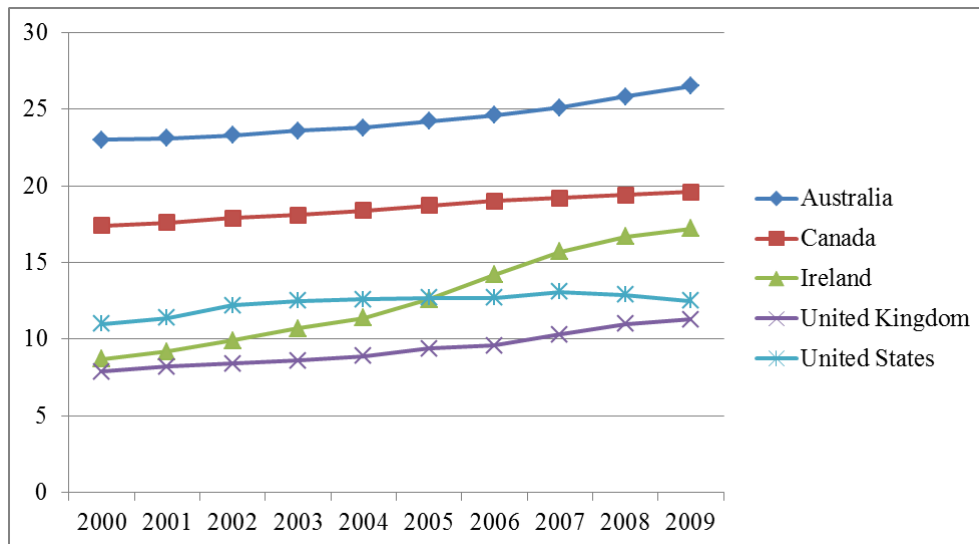
- 32 The election of Tony Blair at the head of the party led to a reinforcement of personal exchanges with Australia. He had spent a few years in Australia when he was a child and later on, at University he had met and befriended some of the future Australian leaders. Tony Blair thus met Kim Beazley there, who would later introduce him to Bob Hawke and Paul Keating in 1982. There he also met Geoff Gallop, a former Premier of Western Australia and Peter Thomson who introduced Blair to Christian Socialism (Hale, 2004).
- 33 There is obviously a common background between the two countries which is likely to facilitate the circulation of ideas. What it actually means in terms of reforms still needs to be assessed. This section will thus focus on how the reforms and discourse on both ethnic diversity and welfare policy are similar in both countries.

The effectiveness of policy transfer

- 34 There are different levels in the policy transfer process. Entire programmes or policies can be borrowed but this remains relatively rare. It would mean that new values would be adopted and former programmes would become completely obsolete. A second level would correspond to the appropriation of the instruments used to implement those programmes and policies: This would for example include grids used to assess the level of assistance recipients need or a specific type of software used to record recipients' data. The learning process can also occur at the institutional level: For instance, the way agencies deliver welfare services can be altered and their organization overhauled, their competences can also be outsourced to other actors.

Technical aspects

- 35 Technical elements appeal to policy-makers. At least at first sight, they seem devoid of moral or ideological ballast. The urge to analyse those technical elements from abroad is directly linked to the situation in the other country. The situation needs to be more pressing than at home as this would entail having taken the steps to solve the tensions created by this situation earlier.
- 36 Australian multiculturalism seems to have had an impact on British policy makers: While 26% of the Australian population was born abroad, the figure is approximately 11% in the United Kingdom. These figures are used to show the diversity of the population even if they are not fully representative (they include Australian and British people born abroad and do not take into account second — or more — generation migrants). But it is the only such figure available in both countries.

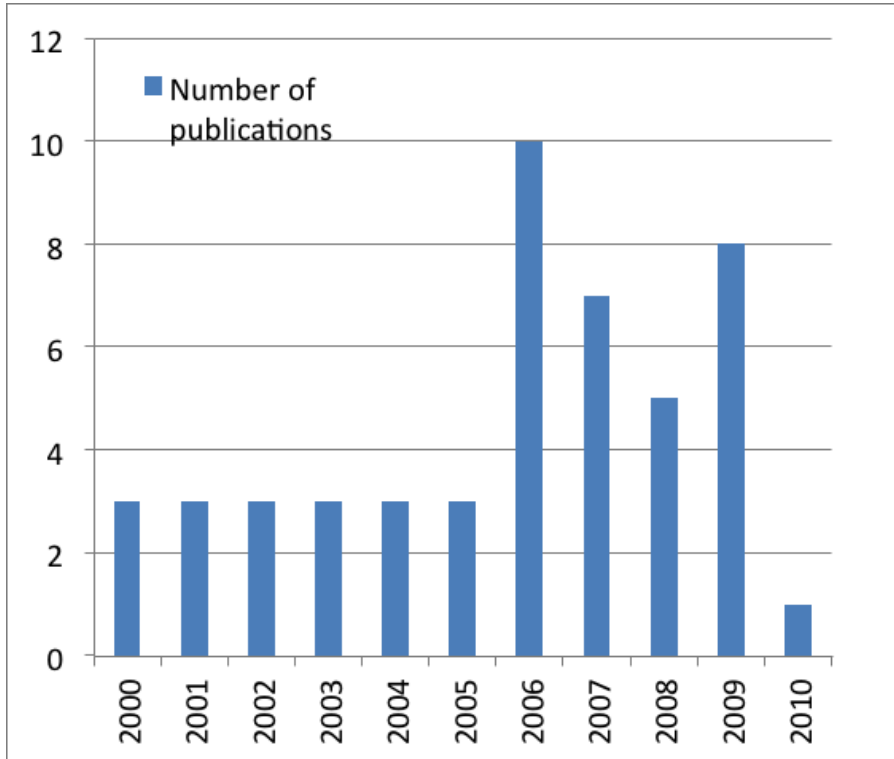
Graph 1: People born abroad (percentage- OECD)

- 37 Even if it is difficult to find satisfactory comparative data, in both countries the situation of ethnic minorities on the labour market is presented as being problematic:

The disadvantaged labour market position of individuals from ethnic minority communities in the United Kingdom is well documented. [...] As a lead public agency, Jobcentre Plus has a key role in addressing this disadvantage and integrating ethnic minorities into the labour market. While it is not the only institution that needs to take action, in recent years concern has grown that Jobcentre Plus may not be providing sufficient or appropriate help to members of ethnic minority groups. Research examining local delivery agents in employment zones has suggested that Personal Advisers do not view ethnicity per se as leading to labour market disadvantage, and will not necessarily provide additional help on these grounds alone (DWP, 2006).

- 38 The British Parliament as well as the Department for Work and Pensions have both published numerous reports on the integration of these groups on the labour market and the assistance they received. With the increasingly guarded approach of Labour on multiculturalism around 2006 and then the election of the Conservatives, reports became rarer:

Table 2: Publications from the DWP on ethnic minorities

 <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Table 2: Publications from the DWP on ethnic minorities</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number of publications</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2000</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>2001</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>2002</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>2003</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>2005</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>1</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Number of publications	2000	3	2001	3	2002	3	2003	3	2004	3	2005	3	2006	10	2007	7	2008	5	2009	8	2010	1	<p>Examples of titles, here 2003</p> <p>RR 201 Delivering benefits and services for black and minority ethnic older people</p> <p>RR 188 Diversity in disability – Exploring the interactions between disability, ethnicity, age, gender and sexuality</p> <p>RR 187 Experiences of lone parents from minority ethnic communities</p>
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- 39 The different reports all underlined that much remained to be done in the United Kingdom on those issues and that is probably why they decided to look at what was being done abroad. Some of the problems raised in the United Kingdom had indeed been addressed in Australia.

Jobcentre Plus lacks advisers who speak ethnic minority languages. Some advisers are making use of the Language Line service and are satisfied with it, while others find it challenging to use. A range of interviewed staff reported that there were resource constraints on drawing on formal types of interpreting support (DWP, 2006).

- 40 Australian multiculturalism was exemplified by the different strategies used to inform recipients from ethnic minorities with a first language other than English as there is a vast array of foreign languages spoken at home in Australia:

Table 3: Languages spoken at home in 2011 according to the Australian Census

Rank	language	persons	%	Rank	language	persons	%	Rank	language	persons	%
1	Mandarin	336410	1,67	11	Korean	79786	0,40	21	Tamil	50151	0,25
2	Italian	299834	1,49	12	Punjabi	71229	0,35	22	Sinhalese	48192	0,24
3	Arabic	287174	1,42	13	Macedonian	68849	0,34	23	Russian	44058	0,22
4	Cantonese	263673	1,31	14	Croatian	61547	0,31	24	Japanese	43691	0,22
5	Greek	252217	1,25	15	Turkish	59622	0,30	25	Dutch	37247	0,18
6	Vietnamese	233390	1,16	16	French	57739	0,29	26	Urdu	36836	0,18
7	Spanish	117498	0,58	17	Indonesian	55870	0,28	27	Thai	36681	0,18
8	Hindi	111351	0,55	18	Filipino	55400	0,27	28	Bengali	35644	0,18
9	Tagalog	81457	0,40	19	Serbian	55114	0,27	29	Afrikaans	35031	0,17
10	German	80371	0,40	20	Polish	50695	0,25	30	Maltese	34396	0,17

41 The availability of such figures underlines the extent to which the multicultural approach was taken seriously in Australia — knowing which languages are spoken at home is deemed of political interest and is associated to a question in the Census.

42 For instance in Australia, documentation explaining the rights and duties of welfare recipients is available in a wide range of languages (in 2010 there were 126 leaflets and other documents published in up to 35 languages (ANAO, 2012)). There has also been an effort to recruit bilingual staff and Centrelink's multilingual call centre has no equivalent elsewhere according the ANAO report :

Most agencies did not offer services equivalent to the Multilingual Call Centre. Only one of the agencies reviewed, the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development, offered eleven Multilingual lines. In comparison, 24 languages are directly available at the Multilingual Call Centre delivering Centrelink services, in addition to nine call-back languages (ANAO, 2012, 63).

43 A report published in 2005 in the United Kingdom shows that there really is a link between what had been done in Australia and what was being proposed in the United Kingdom: *Department for Work and Pensions: Delivery of Services to Ethnic Minority Clients*. This report compared what was being done in four countries: Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and Finland , the assessment of the last two countries being extremely short. Among the schemes that were considered interesting were:

In March 2002 [Centrelink] launched its Multicultural Servicing Strategy (2002 — 04). From this an extensive range of services and products for customers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds has been developed. These include :

- A bilingual recruitment strategy aimed at attracting staff who speak community languages and provide an understanding of the cultural diversity of customers.
- Free on-site and telephone interpreters to assist communications with customers in languages other than English.

- Free translation of customer documents required by Centrelink to verify identity, residence and income.
- Weekly articles in the ethnic press ; and
- Outreach and information services to customers and the community (Select Committee on Work and Pensions, 2005).

44 Among the recommendations of the report was the necessity to offer more documentation in different languages. In their memorandum submitted to the Work and Pensions Committee, the Department for Work and Pensions insisted that leaflets were being translated in a few foreign languages (Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Somali, Urdu and Vietnamese) (Select Committee on Work and Pensions, 2005). More recently, during question time, the DWP submitted the amount spent by the Department for Work and Pensions on Interpreter Services, Foreign Language Document Translations, Braille, BSL and Audio, and Welsh translation for the financial years 2009-10 through to 2011-12 (Hansard, 2013):

Type of Translation	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Interpreter Services	5,500,000	6,500,000	4,600,000
Foreign Language Document Translation	382,459	393,141	347,583
Welsh	67,101	39,155	23,290
British Sign Language and Speech to Text	n/a	40,614	74,459
Braille	28,360	⁽¹⁾ 30,623	41,560
Audio	25,368	⁽¹⁾ —	17,578

- 45 There is no breakdown of the languages being translated but if we compare with translations into Welsh, which are compulsory, documents are probably being translated in more than a dozen languages.
- 46 A few years ago, in countries where multiculturalism had had some echo, these points would have been seen as non-divisive, but this is not longer the case and it is becoming difficult to find accurate data on translations. It is quite telling that in 2012, the Daily Telegraph and other similar newspapers made their headlines on “Millions of pounds [being] spent on Government department translations” (08/03/2012). Those newspapers were unsurprisingly quick to mention the number of Polish, Czech or Slovak translations and quoted people who were eager to explain that if you came to Britain you needed to speak English. More recently, the Prime Minister, David Cameron stated that the government intended to stop printing paperwork in foreign languages (Daily Mail, 18/01/2014).
- 47 Technical elements which were seen as part of the solution to employment issues faced by ethnic minorities are now presented as being part of the problem: more and more people come to the UK because they can get higher benefits and they don’t even need to learn English. So we see that what used be relatively easily transferable no longer is, and that obviously the British government is not going to send delegations to Australia

to see how they enforce support for ethnic minorities. This hints at the difficulty of transferring ideas which have noticeable ideological baggage.

Traditionally divisive ideas

- 48 On technical points, policy transfer seems at first relatively easy, but on issues with a stronger partisan dimension, it is even more difficult to achieve. We have up to now focused on the assistance provided to new arrivals, but there is a less generous image often associated to migrants: they come to a country in order to benefit from a more generous welfare system.
- 49 In the United Kingdom, this has for instance been exemplified at the end of Labour's term when Philip Woolas stated that: "entitlement to benefits should be for citizens of our country, not other people" (*Sun*, 2008).
- 50 He had proposed the implementation of a probationary citizenship that would have led in some cases to give access to welfare payments only after ten years on British soil. The Australian situation was mentioned a few times during the debate. The reform never came through as the Conservatives decided against the project and quoted its inefficiency: "We will not implement Labour's policy of earned citizenship, which was too complicated, bureaucratic and, in the end, ineffective" (May, 2010).
- 51 This doesn't mean that the Conservatives are not eager to use this type of rhetoric on an issue that is prone to escalation, but it is also a topic that gives rise to much debate and little actual reform. The Coalition still went as far as publishing figures on the number of migrants benefiting from welfare and committing fraud:
- It found that as of February 2011 there were 371,000 people claiming DWP working age benefits who were non-UK nationals when they first registered for a National Insurance Number, of these 258,000 were non-EEA nationals (DWP, 2012).
- 52 The report from which those figures were taken in fact stated that only 2% of those recipients committed welfare fraud but it nevertheless gave rise to comments similar to the comments made by Grayling, the Employment Minister:
- It is not acceptable that people from other countries can claim our benefits if they have not worked or paid tax in the UK. We will root out those claimants who cannot prove their immigration status and in turn they will be stripped of their benefits. I was shocked to discover that the current system does not record the nationality of benefit claimants and we are urgently taking steps to make sure we know exactly how many non-UK nationals are claiming UK benefits. Welfare reform is giving us the opportunity to reshape the system and in developing of Universal Credit we are looking at how to record nationality at source (DWP, 2012).
- 53 or Exchequer Secretary David Gauke who chimed in that:
- This Government will not tolerate people who dishonestly divert money away from those who are genuinely entitled to it. We will provide support to people who come to this country in line with our national and international obligations. However, we also have a duty to protect taxpayers from possible abuse. DWP will pass the data of those who should not be in receipt of benefits to HMRC, who will look into all relevant tax credit and child benefit awards and cancel them where necessary (DWP, 2012).
- 54 Interestingly enough, this type of discourse has been in use for years in Australia. Reforms have been presented as unavoidable so as not to turn Australia into an excessively powerful magnet for foreigners (mostly Asians):

People ought to remember that in 1995-96 Australia had 99,139 new settlers to our shores. Of those, more than 75 per cent came from countries from which, should I have chosen to migrate to them, I would have received no support from the government, neither upon my arrival nor after 20 years of citizenship or permanent residency (Hansard, Nelson, 1996).

- 55 In 1991, John Howard, who was then leader of the Opposition had called for a decrease in immigration — to later change his mind — and for the necessity to make welfare payments less readily available to new arrivals:

The Coalition will not permit future migrants access to benefits for two years after they first arrive, unless they are given refugee or humanitarian entry status. Access to Family Allowances will however, be maintained (Coalition programme, 1991).

- 56 The proposal was again part of the Australian Coalition's platform in 1996 (Coalition Programme, 1996). The deliberately careful phrasing of the proposal showed the party's attempt to bar racist attacks. The focus was on the financial difficulties caused by the financial situation of the country.

In January 1993, the Labor Government introduced a six month wait after arrival in Australia for migrants, other than refugees and humanitarian migrants, before they became eligible to receive most welfare benefits.

Access to welfare benefits for migrants other than refugee and humanitarian migrants will be available after two years under a Coalition Government. [...]

As well, the Coalition will provide a 'safety-net' in the form of a special allowance for those migrants whose circumstances change significantly after arrival in Australia for reasons beyond their personal control.

The Coalition projects that this will achieve savings of \$ 602 million over three years. However, this policy will apply to prospective migrants only (Hansard, Costello, 1996).

- 57 The objective was two-fold, first the Coalition needed to appear significantly tougher than the ALP which had already delayed access to welfare payment to six months after arriving in Australia. The new government insisted it was fair⁶ to ask people to get involved in Australian social life for two years before allowing them to benefit from the system. The Coalition liked to repeat that with the ALP rights were available from day one. The other reason behind this proposal was to slow down the headway made by Pauline Hanson and her far-right party One Nation⁷.

- 58 Nevertheless, if the Australian example was mentioned more than once, a rule as clear as that has yet to be implemented in the United Kingdom. There are several elements that limit the feasibility of such a reform. First it is necessary to take into account where migrants are from- and being part of the EU really restricts the UK's leeway: are they from the EU or not? What of type of visa do they have? Does it stipulate "no recourse to public funds"? Then there is the nature of the welfare benefit: For instance unemployment benefits are two-fold; one is contribution-based and the other income-based. In Australia welfare benefits are not contribution-based. It is undoubtedly more difficult to bar people from accessing benefits for which they have sacrificed part of their income than if those benefits are paid by the anonymous "taxpayer". All this challenges the readability of the system. It is indeed quite telling that after years of insisting that migrants shouldn't be allowed to have access to benefits as soon as they arrive on British soil, the only waiting period that is being applied (since January 2014) is 3 months:

From tomorrow (1 January 2014), tough new rules come into force to ensure that migrants don't take advantage of the British benefits system.

As part of the government's long-term economic plan to get people off benefits and into work, a series of reforms have been put in place to make sure migrants wanting to come to this country do everything they can to find a job (DWP, 2013).

Conclusion

- 59 Australia and the United Kingdom have established links in the social policy field. Feeling the need to attract new people for the country to grow, Australia encouraged immigration from diverse parts of the world. Multiculturalism was for a time embraced and led successive governments to implement measures that could be of interest to the British eye. It is however quite clear that the more technical reforms such as the development of an interpretation service were the most likely to be borrowed because they were in a way a lesser source of contention than measures that would directly equate migrants with a burden on public finances. But today, considering Australian fears about the arrivals of "boats" or any type of unplanned immigration and the British position of immigration from Eastern Europe, elements of the reforms which were previously considered as technical, are now a source of contention. Regardless of the international situation, national specificities will always need to be taken into account before importing measures from abroad: In fact, the European construction makes it impossible for the United Kingdom to treat its foreigners in the same way as Australia does. One element remains clear: there is no successful policy transfer without adaptation to the national context.
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NOTES

1. “Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Background describes persons born outside Australia in countries where English is not the main language spoken. It includes migrants and refugees from all countries except: Australia, American Samoa, British Indian Ocean Territory, Canada, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Cook Islands, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, New Zealand, Norfolk Island, South Africa, Sth Georgia & the Sandwich Islands, United Kingdom, UK/Eire, United States Minor Outlying, United States, Virgin Islands British, Virgin Islands US, Zimbabwe” (FaHCSIA, 2013). The acronym CALD for “culturally and linguistically diverse” is more commonly used but its definition is not as clear (it can include people born in Australia, speaking English at home together with another language etc).

2. This does not mean that the parties (ALP/ Labour, Coalition/ UK Conservatives) are identical. They may have very close welfare reform agendas but it is worth noticing differences on their treatment of ethnic minorities. The British Labour Party targeted the middle class at least 20 years earlier than the ALP. The Australian Labor Party had at first been one of the strongest advocates of the White Australia Policy as the party defended the rights of “White Australian” workers. You can at times still see hints of this former position; for instance, Kim Beazley, then head of the ALP, criticised John Howard temporary policy visas, accusing him of importing foreign labour instead of investing in the future of young Australians. There are also differences within parties. It is for instance difficult to compare Malcolm Fraser and John Howard’s stances on multiculturalism. The former is seen as the father of Australian Multiculturalism. He is indeed the first man to have used the term “multi-cultural society” in Parliament (House of Representatives, 20 March 1974). John Howard definitely shifted the immigration policy away from family-reunion programmes to enhance its economic dimension. He repeatedly insisted on the need to reduce the “welfare cost of immigration”.

3. In 1907, the Harvester judgement established and thus protected the level of wages at the federal level. The settlement indicated that workers had to earn enough to be able to pay contributions to a mutual society in case they lost their jobs. This gave rise the “wage earners’ welfare state ” (Castles, 1985)

4. Similarities between the Australian and British political systems include the notion of responsible government. (The Government can be removed by the Parliament at any time). General elections can also be called at anytime although more frequently in Australia than in the UK. Concerning the legal systems, the Australian system logically derives from the English legal system. They are both based on Common Law.

5. Founded in 1988 and is considered as a centre-left think-tank. It is based in London.
 6. Fair is a very powerful word in Australia. For many Australians, Australia is “the land of the fair go”. It dates back to the early days of colonization when white males were expected to be “mates” that helped one another and were building a society that was not focused on class contrary to the mother country.
 7. Pauline Hanson was disendorsed by the Liberal Party after advocating the end of special assistance to Aborigines and other similar outbursts. She ran as an independent and was elected as MP for Oxley in Queensland. In her maiden speech she claimed that Australia was “swamped by Asians”. She founded the party One Nation in 1997 and the party campaigned for a clearly racist anti-immigration policy. The party won 22% of the vote at the Queensland State Elections in 1998, and 9% of the vote at the 1998 general election.
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ABSTRACTS

With a quarter of its population born overseas, Australia has had to face the challenges commonly associated with the integration of minority groups in a singularly acute manner. The way the country has tackled those issues might be of interest to countries which face those questions, albeit in a less stringent manner. Measures such as the creation of an interpreting service and the translation of official documents (e.g. brochures) into languages other than English had drawn the attention of the British government at the time of their implementation. Granting access to welfare payments only after two years on Australian soil was another aspect of the debate that was also picked up by British MPs.

This article will thus analyse how Australia could be a source of inspiration for the United Kingdom in social policy and more particularly when ethnic minorities are concerned.

Avec une population née pour le quart à l'étranger, l'Australie est confrontée aux questions d'intégration des minorités de manière particulièrement aiguë. La manière dont elle y a répondu peut certainement intéresser des pays concernés par ces questions mais de façon moins pressante. Des mesures telles que la mise en place d'un service d'interprétariat, la traduction des différentes plaquettes d'information mises à disposition des allocataires dans les agences Centrelink, l'agence publique responsable du versement des aides sociales, avaient ainsi précisément retenu l'attention du gouvernement britannique à l'époque de leur mise en œuvre. L'impossibilité d'accéder aux aides sociales durant les deux premières années suivant l'arrivée sur le sol australien en tant que résident permanent mise en place dans les années 1990 avait également été relevée dans les débats parlementaires britanniques.

Cet article propose donc d'analyser comment l'Australie a pu servir de modèle au Royaume-Uni dans le domaine des aides sociales et plus particulièrement celles destinées aux minorités ethniques.

INDEX

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